

- Downloadable activity from CAT (coming soon)

This is a teacher led whole class activity. It consists of a pair of graphs projected onto a screen for the whole class to see, which represent a breakdown of our household greenhouse gas emissions.

You will need to explain that the graphs show the UK greenhouse gas emissions per person (about eleven tonnes) which are split to demonstrate where our emissions come from; heating, food etc. (this is the official government figure, researchers believe that it is actually several tonnes higher than this if the emissions from goods produced for us in other countries are included). The horizontal dotted line near the base of the graphs indicates a global fair share of greenhouse gas emissions, and represents our target for reduction.

The activity comes with a series of images which you use to give the pupils choices about things they want to include in the house. (If you like you can supplement these images with the real thing – pieces of insulation, newspapers, games, etc) Start by looking at the biggest portion of our emissions – heating. Use the images to discuss ways of reducing heating emissions in the home, eg insulation, double glazing etc and input the pupils choices into the activity programme.

Pupils will be able to see their emissions fall or rise depending on their choices. Once heating efficiency measures have been put in place, pupils can then choose how to heat their homes from a range of images that include wood stoves, gas central heating, coal fires, etc. Progress through the activity throughout the sectors until you have finished. By the end of the activity, the pupils will probably have managed to reduce their emissions significantly. It is important to discuss with the class what has changed about their lives.

Depending on their choices, they will probably still be able to go on holiday, eat well, live in warm comfortable homes and travel easily, but they may have sacrificed things like large cars, flights, and wide screen TVs. Ask the class whether their quality of life has improved or deteriorated. Talk about things like family, playing football etc. Most things which people value most, like family, friends, music etc, do not have a big impact on the planet.